

MINUTES

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2008

7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION

Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center

Multimedia Room 303

Called to Order by Chairman Marc Dubois

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Michelle Williams, Vice Chairwoman	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Linda Majewski	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

- **Denise Auclair, Parents Advisory Council Co-Chair:** Announced that they had their Reading Assessment Workshop on March 3rd at the WHS. Unfortunately, only 8 people attended. They felt that this was due to a Music Booster Fundraising Workshop going on right next door to the auditorium. "Many parents might have had to choose which workshop they attended. If more people communicated with each other, more parents would have been able to attend these two important functions. I feel that the Music Boosters Budget Workshop could have been postponed. We need to work together. There were over 40 parents in the next room and we only had 4."
- **Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street:** Reiterated some points he made at the last meeting. He had mentioned consolidation of services, such as having a joint superintendent with a neighboring community, which is allowed by state law. He also spoke about pooling city resources and education resources. He had asked for the cost of the maintenance department and the cost to outsource this department to some other group or meet with the city to see if these services could be consolidated. "There has to be a way that we can work together." Auclair asked as a citizen that the WSC and WED administration at least look at this as an option. He heard Dr. Garcia and Gail O'Rourke on the radio this morning regarding the tardies at the WHS. "A year ago, the WSC passed a policy to address this issue. Apparently, it's not working to some degree." He suggested that the WSC check to see what can be fine-tuned. In regards to the superintendent's job description, he requested that the WSC change its by-laws so that rather than the superintendent being clerk of the WSC, have a member of the WSC serve as clerk. "Other districts have a member of the committee serve as clerk." In regards to the 14 Principals of Professionalism and whether or not committee members are employees of the city, Auclair referred to the city charter and General Laws about the definition of city employees. School committee members receive compensation from the city; therefore, they are employees of the city. Auclair also spoke about the NECAP scores and how some people thought the test is too difficult. He thinks it's pretty close to being on target if you compare it to the international test.
- **Cindy McNeill, PAC Co-Chair:** Thanked Linda Filomeno for the great workshop she presented on March 3rd. Cindy was not aware that if she booked the auditorium, it meant that she was only reserving just the front portion. She felt it was deceiving. McNeill also referred to the fact that the PAC and Little League have to fill out forms and other organizations, such as the athletics dept. or music dept., can bump them out of a reserved space. "The Little League was asked to move for the WHS Basketball Team to practice. It's an inconvenience." She asked Mrs. Nadeau what the layout is of the Superintendent Search Committee is. She and Denise Auclair would like to share a seat, as well as have a parent and an alternate share a seat also so that they always have two people there. Mrs. Nadeau told her that she's sending out a letter at the end of the week. She will announce the committee at the next meeting. There will be a group that will just screen applications and then a group that will conduct interviews. Nadeau had asked if the interviews of the top candidates could be videotaped so that people can go and see them at their leisure.
- **Tony Gabriel, 124 Winter Street:** Thanked Dr. Macera and the WPD for their prompt response to the abduction. Announced that he will be at the City Council meeting next week when they discuss the budget. He urged everyone who attended the WSC meeting four weeks ago to go to City Hall next week and do the same thing they did here.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera

Thanked Roger Picard for helping to get CPR and First Aid Training for our PTA members. Reported that on March 8th the WHS Debate Team competed in the RI State Championship and four members were able to go on to the nationals. Announced that Kyle Nordby and Tiara Bottachiari were honored at the Papa Gino's "Feed Your Team" event held earlier this month and got to meet NE Patriot's linebacker Tedy Bruschi as part of the grand prize. Macera recognized members of the WHS Hockey Team for their cold plunge to raise money for Special Olympics.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Open & Closed Sessions of 2/27/08

Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemptions: A. Forcier

- *Personnel Actions (Stipend Positions): R. Plante removed by M. Williams*
- *Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000: Sodexho & Entegra removed by L. Majewski*

2nd: M. Williams

(Unanimously Approved)

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/
Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Dell Computers/Computers/WACTC/Perkins Grant
Keough Kirby Associates, Inc/Student Insurance/WACTC/Perkins Grant
Pearson Education/Novanet Software/Feinstein eLearning Academy/Local
Sodexho and Entegra/Electric Booster Heater/WMS/Lunch Revenue – Removed by L. Majewski
World Almanac Education/Library Books/District/Get READY Library Grant

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

National Automotive Technology Competition/New York, NY/WACTC/RI Auto Dealers Association
RI National Guard Youth Dev. Camp, Coventry, RI/Feinstein/Funded by National Guard (Cancelled)
National Science Teachers Association, Boston, MA/WMS, Savoie, Citizens/Primes Grant
MSSADA/RIAAA Athletic Director's Conference, Hyannis, MA/Athletic Director/WHS/Title II
American Speech-Language Hearing Association, Rockville, MD/McFee/Sp. Ed./American Speech-Lang.
Association

4. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS: Hourly, Stipend and Extra-Curricular Positions

- **Richard Plante - \$10,000 annual stipend for Bernon Shop Coordinator**

Ms. Williams said she thought we weren't going to fill this position because of the budget crunch. Dr. Macera told her that the position has been eliminated, but the duties remain. This is a stipend position.

2. PURCHASES/TRANSFERS OVER \$2,000:

- **Sodexho and Entegra - \$2,043.86 for an Electric Booster Heater at WMS**

Mrs. Majewski asked if the money for this was coming out of surplus. Mrs. Goodman told her "yes" and explained that Sodexho is paid a flat fee per lunch served. Any surplus that is generated through the food service account has to be used towards the food service program.

MOTION TO APPROVE EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Williams **(Unanimously Approved)**

COMMUNICATIONS: Mrs. Majewski went to a meeting on March 5th for school committees, school superintendents and special education directors. She spoke about the special education staffing policy requirement that was provided for the WSC members in their packets. With the new special education regulation changes taking place July 1st, the RI Board of Regents wants to make sure that school districts are still providing high quality special education assistance. The district is required to have it done by that date. A sample policy has been provided as well as a sample for the public input process. Mrs. Forcier said she attended a legislative workshop on Saturday and this topic was discussed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Williams attended a Health and Wellness Committee meeting last night. The Committee is moving along and working on the policy. One thing that was changed with the block scheduling involves that fact that now students might not have gym for a while with this schedule. Dr. Macera had insisted that they look at having gym every other day. "Teachers feel it's a burden because they have twice as many students to grade," said Macera. Williams announced that the next meeting is on April 8th at 6 p.m. in the WHS Library.

Mrs. Majewski reported from the SELAC Committee that a new IEP will be coming out July 1st. It will be on the RIDE website and workshops are being offered through the NRI Collaborative. The RIDE website will list the dates and times of the workshops. The "ABCs of IEPs" is also going to be held at the Collaborative. She thanked Linda Filomeno for her help with the literacy workshop.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Revised Movie Policy – 2nd Passage – L. Majewski

Motion to approve: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd: E. Nadeau

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and Approval of Bid Awards – M. Goodman

• **#08-11 Fire Alarm Testing and Inspection**

Motion to award to AFA of Warwick, RI for a total of \$14,600: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Dubois

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

• **#08-12 Student Planners**

Mrs. Majewski asked if this was grant funded as it was in the past. Mrs. Goodman said it was funded for the WHS for one year under a grant—not at the WMS.

Motion to award to Premier Agendas, Inc., of Bellingham, MA for a total of \$4,302: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

• **#08-13 Outdoor School Sign – Citizens**

Motion to award to J. M. Steward Corp. of Sarasota, FL, for a total of \$8,125 including shipping: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

Mrs. Goodman noted that Alan Shawn Feinstein will be reimbursing us for this purchase. Bernon Heights Elementary still needs a sign.

2. Approval of Expenditures for Superintendent Search – L. Majewski, E. Nadeau

Mrs. Majewski reported that the Superintendent Search Committee is requesting \$10,000 for these expenditures to expedite the process. She gave some of the costs for advertising online, in newspapers, etc. They are hoping to post in the paper between March 30th and April 13th. Mrs. Nadeau reported that during their research they realized that some school districts hired consultants to do their superintendent search and the minimum fee for that was \$30,000. "Any unexpended funds will be returned to the budget," said Nadeau. Mrs. Forcier was able to speak with Leo Fontaine about having a City Council member on the Search Committee and Councilwoman

Suzanne Vadenais volunteered to be on the Committee. She has some background serving on the school committee.

Motion to approve: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2nd: A. Forcier

CONFERENCES

Reading Recovery Presentation - Julie Francis/Linda Filomeno – POSTPONED

PowerPoint Presentation on School-Wide Literacy Initiative – Dr. Garcia

Dr. Garcia explained that at the high school level, many kids are not performing well. It's a nationwide problem – not just in Woonsocket. He reviewed the demographics of Woonsocket and Woonsocket High School students. It has a very diverse population. He covered the national trends in literacy such as approximately 50% of high school graduates not being prepared for college-writing level. Studies have found that there is a direct correlation between literacy and academic achievement and proficient readers/writers are better prepared for postsecondary schools and the workplace. The literacy goals for the WHS are to improve student academic achievement by focusing on Reading, Writing, Speaking & Reasoning and to improve communication with students by engaging them in the learning process and providing them with life-skills experience. Garcia provided data on the WHS performance on the NSRE 2006, which showed that WHS was at 42% in English proficiency compared to the state average of 53%. The WHS was at 27% proficiency in Math compared to the state average of 43%. The school's status is showing insufficient progress. Dr. Macera noted that since then, our reading levels have gone up to 51%; and of the urban communities, we were the highest scoring community. There is a nationwide problem of students writing below grade level. We have shown improvement in students reading below grade level, but still need to do more to improve their ability to solve problems. Students have trouble explaining how they arrive at the answer. They may know the answer, but can't explain how they got it. He provided bar graphs showing the percentage of students in need of help. A "Think Tank" Committee has been formed to research, analyze, develop, implement, and monitor literacy across disciplines. Every teacher is considered a literacy teacher and teachers are to have high expectations of "all" students. The Think Tank Committee already has an Action Plan developed. Professional development will include training the trainer and providing interdisciplinary and department workshops. Literacy chart will be developed and posted in every classroom and provided to students. These charts show how reading, writing, problem solving, and speaking can be applied to each of the four core subjects of English, Social Studies, Math and Science.

Mrs. Forcier liked the goal of having students take ownership of their own learning. She thought he did a good job on the radio this morning. Mrs. Nadeau asked if students have a public speaking class at the WHS. Dr. Garcia noted that they had four students who competed in debate and will be going to the national competition. "In Social Studies they do have public speaking, but it needs to be done regularly. Students need to learn interviewing skills. Learning walks were held last week and I saw good teaching going on and also saw some areas where it was required to explain. We got positive feedback from most of the teachers. Peer observation is a great way of improving their skills," said Garcia. Mrs. Majewski is very excited about this plan. She is very pleased with what he has done and asked whether music, art, technology and business could be included in the chart visuals. She asked if adding a listening and viewing component to these charts could be done as well and offered to help him in any way she can. Majewski commended him on his leadership. Mrs. Dubois thanked him as well.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera responded to some suggestions that had been made to help with the budget crunch and other issues brought up during Public Good & Welfare. She supports regionalization and feels we have done a great deal with consolidating custodial and clerical positions. The tardiness policy is still in place at the WHS. "We have integrated another component which refers students who are continually late to the alternative program." She will try to see to it that the room reservation conflicts at the WHS are kept to a minimum. "The annual audit that will soon be announced will indicate that the school department has a surplus from past years as well as this year." She commended everyone on being so responsible in the use of our funds. She has a meeting with the Board of Superintendents on the report regarding the NRI Collaborative. There's a motion on the docket to refund a surplus to the districts that were overcharged. She thanked Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Forcier for attending a hearing today of the House HEW where we presented to the committee our positive support for a dress code. "Under current law, school committees do not have the power to institute a dress code." She thanked Roger Picard for bringing this legislation forward.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

Dubois: Thanked Dr. Garcia for his presentation. Congratulated the WHS basketball team on getting as far as they did. Said he has received twenty calls from people wanting to be on the Superintendent Search Committee. "There's no way we can have everyone on it." Thanked everyone for showing their interest in getting involved. He was impressed with the Woonsocket Police Dept. and McFee for the quick response to the abduction near the WHS and having fliers going home that day. He has had positive responses about that.

Majewski: Thanked Dr. Macera for getting those letters out. Congratulated the basketball team, saying they played exceptionally well. Also congratulated the Debate Team and the PAC for the literacy workshop. Asked about guidelines for tardiness policy they received yesterday. "Isn't that the one that Mr. Nasuti put in place?" she asked. Dr. Macera said that it was not fully implemented and has been tightened up. It reinforces the WSC policy that was adopted. Majewski would like a report from Dr. Garcia on how it's going in a couple of weeks. She suggested a reading/writing class at the WMS level. In regards to booking space, she recalled there had been talk about developing a district-wide calendar, possibly online. She feels it would really help to see if something is already booked. Dr. Macera said that any outside agency is required to have an insurance bond to book a space.

Forcier: She asked who pays for the gas for the school buses. Mr. Legare said that Valley Transportation pays for it. Mrs. Goodman said that the contract calls for the school department to pay anything in excess of 10% of a set dollar amount. Forcier said that other districts are paying for the gas and not paying tax. Mr. Legare thought it was something to look into. She mentioned that people keep bringing up on the radio talk shows the fact that the school department is providing free universal breakfast and how it's costing the taxpayers money. "It's not costing us any money." Mrs. Goodman agreed and said that the food service program is self-supporting. Forcier congratulated the basketball team. "It's hard to take when you lose in overtime by a small amount." Thanked Roger Picard for supporting us at the House hearing regarding the uniforms even though the ACLU is going to oppose it. Urged parents to send letters to their legislators in support of it.

Nadeau: She was told that we should also contact Senator Cote once this legislation gets to the Senate. She's in favor of some form of regionalization, but cautioned that if it's not done correctly, the City of Woonsocket would not be in a good position. "As far as sharing a superintendent, in Woonsocket we do not have a Deputy Superintendent. I think that in this city we definitely need our own superintendent. I don't think it would be in the best interest of this district to share a superintendent. I want someone who can devote all their time and energy to this district only."

Williams: Thanked Dr. Macera and the WPD for the notices that went out. She read the article in the paper today and there was no description of the type of vehicle used. Dr. Macera said that the police couldn't share that information. Thanked Mrs. Nadeau and Mrs. Forcier for their hard work on the Superintendent Search Committee. She got a phone call about the Globe Park dishwasher. It's not working and won't work until a ventilation system is put in. Dr. Macera will check into it. Congratulated the basketball team. Mentioned that there was a Math night at the WMS tonight that she would have liked to attend. There was something else not too long ago that was on a WSC meeting night. "Why couldn't it have been next Wednesday?" She mentioned the boy's basketball team needing to use the gym on Saturday was something that couldn't have been foreseen. She attended the Health and Wellness Meeting at the WHS and it was packed. It was parent/teacher conference night as well. The Minority Concerns Meeting will be rescheduled to Wednesday, April 2nd, at 7 p.m.

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.: M. Williams

2nd: A. Forcier (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary